

Reexamination Report

Jersey City Master Plan and Regulations

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The City of Jersey City adopted a new Master Plan in May of 2000, after more than a year of preparation, which included intensive staff research and preparation with community groups and leaders. The results were presented to and discussed within all six of the city's wards ultimately leading to a consensus on the city's future. The new Master Plan led to a total revision of the city's Zoning Ordinance into the Jersey City Land Development Ordinance, which was adopted in April of 2001.

Since adoption of the May 2000 Master Plan, there have been a number of reexamination reports adopted; followed by timely amendments to the Master Plan based on the recommendations of those reports. The first reexamination report was adopted by the Planning Board after five and a half years, in December 2005, and subsequent reports followed in 2006, 2007, 2011, with the latest report to date issued in July of 2011.

The Municipal Land Use Law requires a municipal review of the city's plans and regulations at least once every ten years, but such review may occur at any time deemed warranted by changing land use demands and conditions.

The reexamination report shall state:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in Jersey City at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

These requirements are addressed as follows:

The major problems and objectives relating to land development in Jersey City at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.

The last Master Plan Reexamination Report was adopted on July 14, 2011. At that time, the following major problems and objectives relating to land development in Jersey City were identified as follows:

1. Expansion of Restaurant Row Overlay Zones.
2. Creation of the Riverview Arts District Overlay Zone.
3. Coordination of Land Transportation and Land Use Planning.

The Planning Board recommended that the master plan be amended to address the issues listed above in the following specific ways:

Expand the Restaurant Row Overlay Zones to accommodate evident growth in demand for Restaurant uses in growth areas throughout Jersey City.

Following the demolition of 111 First Street and the consequent relocation of many artists to the Heights Neighborhood, amend the Land Development Ordinance to create an art overlay district in the Riverview section of the Heights neighborhood conforming generally to the boundaries of the "Riverview Arts District" which had been adopted by the Jersey City Municipal Council in 1984.

Update the Land Use Plan to reflect the goals of the Circulation Element to better promote a transit and pedestrian friendly built environment.

The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

All of the above issues and recommendations have been addressed in the past several years since the adoption of the last report except for alignment of the Land Use Plan and the circulation element.

The Restaurant Row Overlay Zone has been expanded to include several additional commercial corridors where restaurant uses appear to be in demand as well as single sites which are also appropriate for a restaurant use within mixed use, walkable districts of Jersey City.

The Riverview Arts District Overlay Zone was adopted to address the influx of artists into the Heights Neighborhood following their displacement from other areas of the City. The Overlay zone adds Artist Live Work as a permitted principal use within the overlay zone, which has been delineated on the City's Zoning Map.

The Land Use Plan has yet to be updated to better align with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan Circulation Element which was adopted in April of 2009. This is still a work in progress.

The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.

While there have been no significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised in July 2011, there have been significant changes in land use demands and conditions in the past nine years and since the adoption of the first re-examination report in 2005, as relates to Historic Preservation, that were not addressed in any of the four subsequent, interim reports.

West Bergen-East Lincoln Park Historic District

The Jersey City Master Plan, adopted in May 2000, included a Historic Preservation Element (section IX) that stated "the designation of additional local resources has been slow due to fears of gentrification ([specifically,] Bergen Hill area) that will increase housing prices in historic areas and by misperceptions of economic hardship that property owners will face to maintain their properties in historic districts." Since the 2000 adoption of the Jersey City Master Plan, increased awareness as to the benefits of historic preservation has led to greater neighborhood support and advocacy for the creation of additional historic districts outside of those currently adopted.

Furthermore, on page 11 (IX-11) of the Historic Preservation Plan Element, the local designation of additional resources is recommended; "Consideration should be given to landmarking additional neighborhoods and properties as Local Historic Districts and Landmarks." The West Bergen Historic District is specifically recommended for "local designation and nomination to the State and National Registers" (Phase 2 Survey of Ward B, Jersey City Appendix A of Section IX, the "West Bergen Historic District" (0906-B5) and was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (ID# 3907 SHPO Opinion 11.18.97). Also recommended for designation were *First Church of Christ Scientist*, 154-6 Harrison Avenue (0906-B5 HAR 3), 292 Harrison Avenue (0906-B5 HAR 13), *Temple Beth El*, 2415-31 J.F. Kennedy Boulevard (096-B5 JFK 2), Lincoln Park (0906-B5 LPK), *Saint Aloysius Roman Catholic Church Complex*, 691-703 West Side Avenue [&] 178 Kensington Avenue (0906-B6-WS1,2,3,4) which have been included in the expanded boundaries recommended by the City's Historic Preservation Staff and the City's Consultant.

Fears of gentrification, mentioned in the 2000 Master Plan, have somewhat dissipated. In 2000, those fears were great enough to forestall continued historic preservation efforts outside the downtown area. However, today, those same neighborhoods have approached the Division of City Planning to request inclusion on the national, state and local Registers of Historic Places. The benefits of historic preservation: the success of the downtown districts, stable and/or increased property values, stabilization and recycling of older historic housing stock, the retention of historic fabric, the creation of jobs, potential cultural tourism, a heightened sense of and pride in place and a deeper sense of community appear to be strong incentives for state and national register designation as well as municipal landmarking of additional districts. Additionally, the continued demand and the ever increasing valuation of historic properties in the existing historic districts

have led to housing within potential and eligible historic districts outside of the designated districts coming into greater demand. In the past, many unprotected historic resources and districts retained integrity due to simple inertia as well as a respect for their integrity. As Jersey City residents have been displaced by high rents and real estate values Downtown, and as new residents looking for attractive alternatives to New York City purchase homes in these areas, unprotected historic resources and neighborhoods have become increasingly desirable and are threatened by inappropriate renovations, tear downs, and new, incompatible construction. Given the renewed public desire for historic preservation outside of downtown, it is now appropriate to revisit the local designation of additional historic districts.

The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

In order to address the issues outlined above, it is recommended that the master plan be amended to include the following:

1. The **Historic Preservation Plan Element** should be updated throughout to reflect current conditions since the adoption of the Master Plan in 2000.
2. The **Introduction** and **Additional Historic Resources** should be amended to recommend a new City-Wide Historic Preservation Survey be undertaken as a follow up to the Cultural Resource Inventories (Phase I and Phase II) performed by Dr. Joseph Brooks and Mary Kierick, respectively, in the 1980s.
3. **Locally-Designated Historic Districts and Landmarks** should be amended and updated to include the nine additional, individual landmarks that have been designated since 2000, the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission to the Planning Board to adopt the West Bergen-East Lincoln Park Historic District. The exact boundaries of the West Bergen-East Lincoln Park District as defined in the Designation Report by Hunter Research, Inc. should be inserted into this section.
4. The **State and National Register of Historic Places** should be amended and updated to include additionally designated resources and to remove resources that have since become ineligible.
5. The **Regulatory Framework** should be updated to remove the exemption, since discontinued, that non-profit entities are not required to comply with the use and bulk standards of the Historic Districts.
6. The **Definitions** Section should be updated to reflect the increase in applications since 2000 and amended to remove the Certificates of Economic Hardship, since discontinued and property owner consent being necessary to designate a property or district.
7. **Local Designation of Additional Resources** should be amended to conduct further Designation Reports for additional Historic Districts, including but not limited to Bergen Hill and Sparrow Hill

and the designation of cobblestone streets, yellow brick roads and statues, memorials and monuments in municipal parks.

The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law,” P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

Jersey City should continue to use the powers of the redevelopment statute as they have proven to serve us well as valuable development tools to renew our city. There are 89 redevelopment plans currently in place, and several more planned and in various stages of development. It is recommended that all adopted redevelopment plans, and any that may be adopted prior to the issuance of the next re-examination report, be incorporated into the Land Use Plan element of the Jersey City Master Plan by reference.